CROAKY FROG'S STORY

By AMY PRENTICE

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Aunt Amy's Animal Stories

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Bunny Rabbit's Story	30 ILLUSTRATIONS
Billy Goat's Story	32 ILLUSTRATIONS
Brown Owl's Story	31 ILLUSTRATIONS
Croaky Frog's Story	28 ILLUSTRATIONS
Frisky Squirrel's Story	30 ILLUSTRATIONS
Gray Goose's Story	32 ILLUSTRATIONS
Mickie Monkey's Story	35 ILLUSTRATIONS
Mouser Cat's Story	35 ILLUSTRATIONS
Plodding Turtle's Story	30 ILLUSTRATIONS
Quacky Duck's Story	34 ILLUSTRATIONS
Speckled Hen's Story	28 ILLUSTRATIONS
Towser Dog's Story	32 ILLUSTRATIONS

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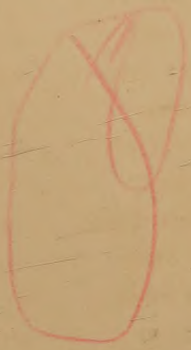

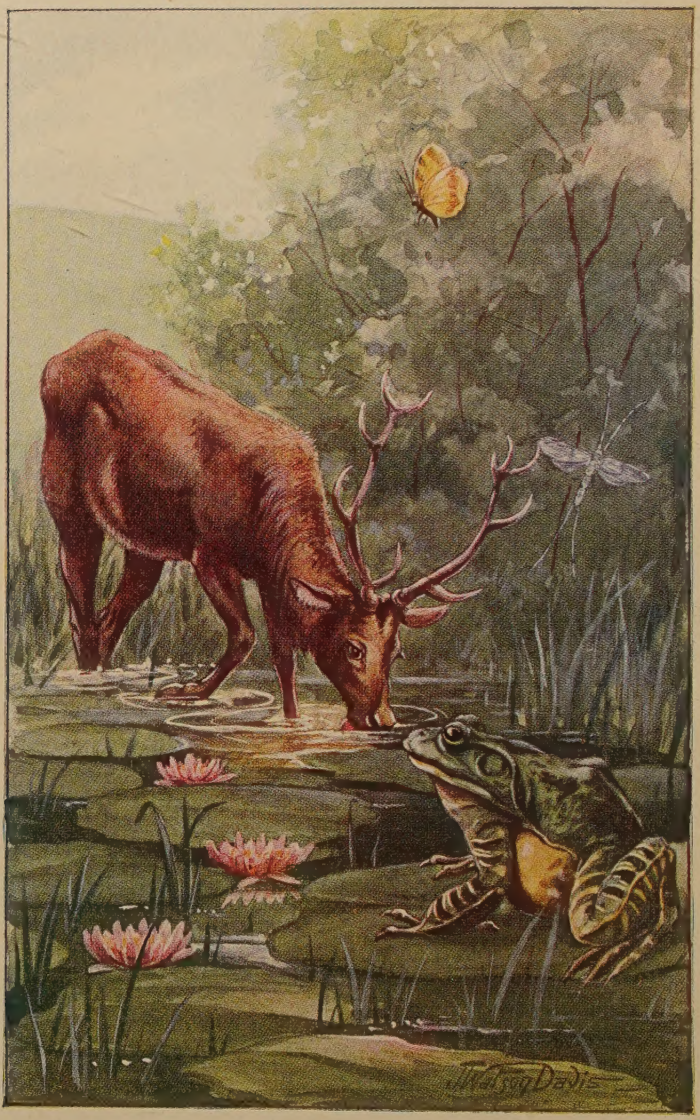

"Good Evening" said Croakey Frog. "Get out of my way" said Mr. Deer "or I'll step on you."

Croakey Frog's Story.

Aunt Amy's Animal Stories

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By AMY PRENTICE

With Four Colored Plates and
Twenty-Eight Illustrations in Black
BY J. WATSON DAVIS

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CROAKY FROG'S STORY
By Amy Prentice

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By AMY PRENTICE.

On a certain afternoon not many days ago your Aunt Amy went down to the shore of the pond which is near her home, with the hope that she might see Mr. Plodding Turtle, and find him in the humor for telling stories. Mr. Turtle has lived so long in this world, and seen so many interesting things, that it is very pleasant to meet him when he feels like talking.

The Croaky Frog.

The old fellow did not show himself, although your Aunt Amy waited patiently nearly an hour, and she was about to go home again when she heard, or fancied she did, these words spoken in a very gruff voice:

"Howareyou? Howareyou? Howareyou?"

Then there was a sudden splashing of the water, and a very large frog, with a green coat and a yellowish vest, hopped out from beneath a lily pad to a toad-stool near the edge of the pond, where he sat looking up at your Aunt Amy in a most comical manner.

"I wonder if you're the person who wastes her time talking with that foolish old Mr. Turtle?"

"I have spent some time with Mr. Turtle; but it hasn't been wasted, nor does he appear to be foolish," your Aunt Amy said, not willing to hear any one speak in such a way of her friend.

"He's so slow that it must take him all day to tell what time it is. Now if you like to hear any one talk, I've got nothing else to do for a couple of hours, and when I've finished, you'll be ready to agree that a frog is much more interesting as a story-teller than a turtle. Of course I ought to talk better than he, for I've got a tongue that can be used in any way, nothing like Mr. Turtle's, that is fastened in such a manner he can only wag one end of it."

As he ceased speaking he opened his mouth, thus showing your Aunt Amy that his large, red tongue, which looked as if it was covered with

some sticky substance, grew from the very edge of his mouth, without being attached elsewhere, and when not in use was folded backward toward his throat.

In order to show how expertly he could use it, Mr. Frog darted his long tongue out as a fly went past, and caught him, the sticky covering holding the victim securely. It was done so quickly that your Aunt Amy saw only what looked like a flash of red light.

"Do you live near here, Mr. Frog?" your Aunt Amy asked, and the old fellow puffed out his yellow throat as if with pride, when he replied:

"I've got four or five homes; but just now, while the tadpoles are young, I'm living under that rock nearest the big lily pad."

"I suppose you are taking care of the young tadpoles?" your Aunt Amy said, and the old fellow looked up with a wink as he said in a peculiar tone:

"Oh yes, I'm taking care of them whenever they swim around where I am, and when it comes to taste, I don't object if they are full grown frogs providing they are not too large for me to swallow."

"What! do you really eat your own neighbors

and relatives?" and your Aunt Amy was thoroughly astonished.

"I eat young frogs and tadpoles, of course," Mr. Frog said as if it seemed to him no more than natural he should enjoy such food.

"What else do you eat, Mr. Frog?"

"Well, flies are not at all bad, although it is a good deal of work to catch a full meal. Of course I want fish now and then, and beetles, water-snails or crawfish make good dinners. Look here, do you know that I have caught and swallowed two birds in my lifetime?"

"Birds!" your Aunt Amy cried in surprise. "How can a frog catch a bird?"

WHEN MR. FROG TRIED TO BE KING.

"It isn't so very hard when the sparrows come down to the pond to drink. Mr. Greeny Frog, who lives under the lily pad next to me, and who once tried to be elected to the throne, has eaten more birds than there are toes on all four of his feet."

Your Aunt Amy had never heard that a frog ever tried to be king, and said she had always

supposed Mr. Stork was the one who had been given the right to rule among the lily pads.

"Oh, it wasn't king of the frogs only, that Mr. Greeny wanted to be; but of *all* the creatures. I've got a song that tells the whole story, and although I am just a bit hoarse this afternoon, I'll sing it for you."

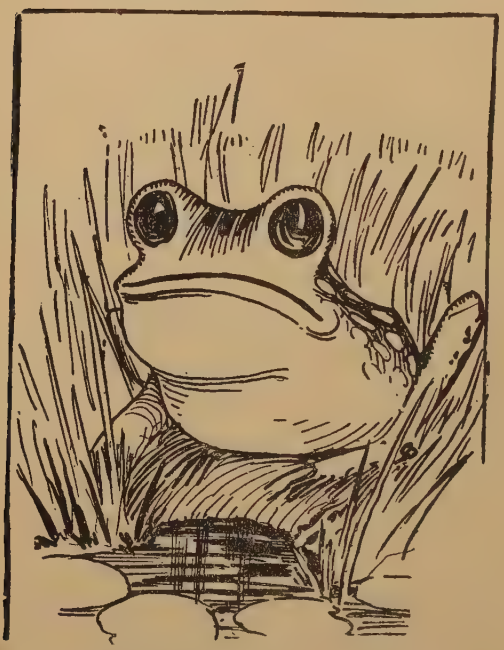
"Then, without waiting to be urged, Mr. Frog sang in a deep bass voice the following verses:

Election time was drawing near,
The creatures of the jungle gathered—
The hump-backed buffalo, the deer,
The cloven-footed and gaily feathered.
His snakelets dangled from a tree;
His vote it was a long one, surely.
Mister Orang-Outang was free—
He knows he'll win the prize securely.

For all the creatures of the wild
Their caucauses are holding duly
According to the manners mild
Of human beings, and as truly.
One must be voted to preside,
To settle all the views presented;
The lion laughs a low deride—
He knows he's safe, and is contented.

The chairman was a sage old bird—
A pelican was voted, lustry;

His song's the strangest ever heard ;
His tone is hard and raspy, rusty.
"I name," said he, with husky tone—
'Twas filled with bones of tiny fishes—
"I name the king of beasts alone,
The loudest voiced. Go vote your wishes."



The Frog who Wanted to be King.

The elephant he did his best ;
His deepest squeal was like a whistle.
The laughing jackass strained his breast,
Then stopped to gobble up a thistle.

Upon a lily pad a frog,
His deep, sonorous voice uplifted;
But when the lion roared the frog
Of questionable king was drifted.

"That's the song," Mr. Frog said as he leaned back against a bunch of bulrushes which grew just behind the toad-stool. "I call it a good one for my style of singing. Is it true? Oh, come now, I can't cross my throat on that, you know. Anyway, I think there's as much truth in it as there is in the old story of the log of wood and the stork, that you're thinking about. We frogs don't believe very much of that, though it happened a good while ago when, perhaps, we were more foolish than we are now.

"Oh, yes, I've heard my great-grandfather tell it time and time again. He had an idea that it was really the truth, although by his account it didn't happen exactly as I've heard Mr. Man tell the story. My great-grandfather used to say that once upon a time all the frogs asked for a king, because they couldn't elect one of themselves to the office without having a terrible fight, and that somebody threw a big log of wood into the pond.

THE STORK WHO WAS LOOKING FOR AN OFFICE.

"Now don't think you can frighten frogs by making a great splashing in the water, for we do that ourselves when we want to drive the minnows out from under the lily pads. Our people knew that somebody was making fun of them, and jumped all over the log to show they hadn't been fooled. Then a stork came along, and said he'd heard they were looking for a king; he had a lot of papers with him to show he could do the work as it should be done, and said he wasn't looking for wages as much as he was for a place where he wouldn't have the flesh worked all off his bones.

"Now you mustn't suppose that the frogs were so foolish as to elect him until they had found out what kind of a king he would make. It so happened, as was learned afterward, that this stork, who was traveling around claiming to be looking for work, was a worthless kind of a fellow, too lazy to fish for his own dinner, and when he came to the pond where my great-grandfather lived he hadn't had a really decent meal for nearly a week.

"Well, because he seemed to be in a hurry to have the matter settled, our people chose four of

Mr. Stork picked up the fattest frog and swallowed him. Page 13.
Croaky Frog.

the oldest and biggest frogs in the colony to see what Mr. Stork had to say for himself, and it was agreed that this committee should meet the fellow who wanted to be king, at the end of the log that had been thrown into the pond to fool them.

"The committee sat on the log, and asked Mr. Stork to tell them where he had been living, and why he believed he was fitted to rule over a tribe of respectable frogs. Of course Mr. Stork had a good story all made up, and when he told it the committee began to ask questions.

"All this time Mr. Stork was about as hungry as he had ever been in his life; it was near night, and I suppose he began to think he wouldn't get anything to eat until breakfast time if he stopped to answer all the questions they wanted to ask. There were four big frogs right in front of him, and he couldn't hold out against the temptation. While the committee were whispering among themselves, he picked up the fattest in his long bill, and swallowed him.

"Well, he simply showed that he was a greedy fellow, and because of it lost the crown, for my great-grandfather says that the committee had nearly made up their minds to elect him when he swallowed the chairman, and the other three dove

into the water in a hurry. The stork stayed around the pond two days hunting for more frogs, and never saw so much as the nose of one. Then he went away, looking for a place where he could be well fed without having to do very much work, and the frogs agreed to get along without any king. I believe that story is as true as the other, because my great-grandfather said it was.

"It really makes no difference whether it is true or not," your Aunt Amy said quickly, more interested in the frog himself than in the fables regarding him. "I have been told that fishermen catch frogs by using a bait of a bright red color. Why do you bite at such things?"

"Why?" Mr. Frog cried angrily, his throat swelling out at the bare thought of anything red. "It hurts my eyes, and I get provoked when I see it. The only thing bright which I care for is a fire, and I could look at the flame even of a candle for very many hours without getting tired. I don't understand why it is; but I do enjoy such a sight, so much so that greedy men or boys who are so cruel as to eat frog's legs, catch many of my people by placing a lamp where we can get at it.

"Twice I have had the very narrowest escape

from being taken prisoner while looking at a bright light which had been put among the lily pads as a trap, and even while knowing the danger, I can't for the life of me prevent myself from going where anything which is on fire, can be seen. Do you know why I came out here this afternoon to talk with you, when I might have been sunning myself on that beautiful damp rock?

"Of course you don't know, and I must tell you before any one comes to disturb us. Do you remember a beautiful poem which was made by a Mrs. Goose,—Mother Goose, my grandfather used to call her? It is about a member of my family who at one time thought of marrying a mouse."

WHEN MOTHER GOOSE MADE A MISTAKE.

"Do you mean the nursery jingle of "A Frog Who Would a Wooing Go?'" your Aunt Amy asked, and Mr. Frog winked in delight as he replied:

"That is the very one, and I am deeply interested in it because it was a second cousin of my great-grandfather's about whom the verses were written. What I'm complaining of is the way

men people have twisted the lines. I once heard Mr. Man's boy reciting them, and they were all wrong, with a lot of words mixed in that did not belong there. Now, so my great-grandfather

His Great-Grandfather's Second Cousin.

said, 'Squire Owl helped write the poem, and it was quite the rage around here for a long time, so much so that my great-grandfather had pictures taken of all the animals that were spoken of in it.

And when they came to Mouse's Hall, they gave a loud knock.

Wait here just a minute, and I will get the family album."

Without waiting for a reply, Mr. Frog leaped into the water, returning shortly afterward with a number of pictures neatly bound in a book made of dried lily pads, and your Aunt Amy has had them all printed in here that you may see what Mr. Frog showed so proudly.

"There is the photograph of my great-grandfather's second cousin," Mr. Frog said as he pointed to the first picture.

"Now I'll tell you just what 'Squire Owl wrote about it, and I hope you'll remember the lines, for all my family are anxious to have them kept exactly as they first appeared:

A frog he would a wooing go
Whether his mother would let him or no;
So off he went with his nice new hat,
And on the way he met with a rat.

And when they came to Mouse's Hall,
They gave a loud knock, and they gave a loud call,
"Pray, Mrs. Mouse, are you within?"
"Oh, yes, kind sirs, I'm learning to spin."

"Then this picture comes next, and my great-grandfather says that the faces look just as he remembers them.

"The verses go on in this way, without any foolish words to them such as Mr. Man's boy repeated:

"Pray, Mrs. Mouse, will you give us some beer,
For Froggy and I are fond of good cheer?"
Now while they all were merry-making
The cat and her kittens came tumbling in.

Merry-Making at Mouse's Hall.

"Here is the photograph of that miserable Mrs. Cat and her disagreeable young ones.

"This is the verse that comes next, and it almost brings tears to my eyes, for it tells how the terrible work was begun.

The cat she seized the rat by the crown,
The kittens they pulled the little mouse down,
This put poor frog in a terrible fright,
So he took up his hat and wished them good-night.

"Here is the picture which shows how my great-grandfather's poor second cousin was swallowed up by a cruel fate.

Mrs. Cat and her Babies.

"Now listen to the story of the end, and you will no longer be surprised because it makes us feel badly to hear the jingle repeated by Mr. Man's boy as if he was reading the words from a comic valentine:

But as Froggy was crossing a brook,
A lily-white duck swallowed him up,

And that was the end of one, two and three,
The rat and the mouse and little Froggie.

The Disappearance of the Second Cousin

"We have one more picture of the unfortunate friends, and it was painted to show how happy they might have been if there were no such things as ducks in the world. Here it is."

Mr. Frog looked as if he was on the point of bursting into tears when your Aunt Amy gave him back the picture of the three friends as they might have been but for the duck, and she said:

"Why do you think of such things if they make you sad, Mr. Frog? Tell me something about yourself, for I know very little of how you live."

The Three Friends.

"There wouldn't be much of a story to that," Mr. Frog replied thoughtfully. "I'm willing to admit that we love to sit in the sun whenever it is possible; but there are so many animals who try to kill us, we don't find half the enjoyment in this life that you'd fancy. Now there are weasels; I almost hate weasels. If you are sitting on a lily pad watching for a night-bird to come after a drink, or looking for a small frog, up sneaks a weasel so softly that even a frog with his big ears can't hear him. Then he gives one nip, and it's all over."

"But you can't blame him for killing, when you are out for the same purpose, Mr. Frog," your Aunt Amy said, and her visitor stood on his hind legs, so excited did he become.

"It's different with me," he cried. "I'm out after something to eat; but Mr. Weasel kills just for the fun of the thing. If he bites Bunny Rabbit through the head, he may stop for just a mouthful of the blood, but no more. I say it is all right for me to pick up a frog or a minnow, when I'm hungry; but to murder them just for the fun of it, is all wrong.

WHEN MR. OX WAS NERVOUS.

"Now some people don't like frogs anyway, and are as willing to kill them as Mr. Ox was when he murdered my grandfather."

"Tell me about it," your Aunt Amy said, and after wiping a tear from his eye, Mr. Frog began:

"It happened over on the other side of this very pond, when my grandfather had taken three of my uncles out for a sunning on the lily-pads. The four of them were sitting there as peaceable as flies, and my grandfather was singing a story to

Mr. Ox tells the frogs they are making too much noise. Page 23.
Croaky Frog.

the youngsters, when Mr. Ox stuck his head over the bulrushes, and said, as short as pie-crust:

"'I wish you would stop making such a horrible noise.'

"Of course my grandfather didn't pay any attention to what Mr. Ox said, for surely he had a right to sing wherever it suited him best, and one of my uncles told me that it wasn't more than a minute before Mr. Ox put his foot right down on my poor old grandfather. When he took it up again there wasn't anything left that looked very much like a frog, for the old fellow had been squeezed as flat as a cookie."

"What other enemies do you have?" your Aunt Amy asked as the sad story came to an end, and Mr. Frog replied:

"Of course the cranes and storks gobble us whenever they get a chance, and if a bear is hungry he won't turn up his nose at a fat frog. 'Squire Owl's family give us a good deal of worriment, though a fellow must be slow if he's caught by one of that tribe. Then Mr. Man's boys make about as much trouble for us as we need, for when they ain't regularly fishing for my people, the chances are that they throw stones, which you'll agree isn't pleasant. Supposing you were sitting

on a lily-pad, and a crowd of boys began to throw rocks at you just for fun? I can't make out why they like to do such things so well!

"No, I can't say that I remember very much about being a tadpole. You see it was so long ago, and I was so young, that I didn't give much heed to what was going on, though I know I felt proud when my feet grew out and I lost my tail. There was one time when I didn't really know whether I was a fish or something else, and it makes a fellow feel queer to be in such a fix.

WHEN MRS. PERCH WAS FOOLISH.

"There was one thing which happened when I didn't have any legs, that I'll never forget. I was living in the Orphan Asylum then, for nobody knew where my mother and father were, and under the next rock was a couple of young perch who had just been married. Little Mrs. Perch was a real nice kind of a fish, and I think she would have done considerable good in the world, if she could only have persuaded herself to be contented.

"You see the trouble was that in the crotch of the willow tree which hung over the home of Mr.

and Mrs. Perch a pair of bluejays had built a nest, and Mrs. Bluejay made so much show with her fine feathers that Mrs. Perch got real jealous. She seemed to think it was living in a tree, which made birds so fine, and from the time that idea came into her head, she wasn't contented for a single minute.

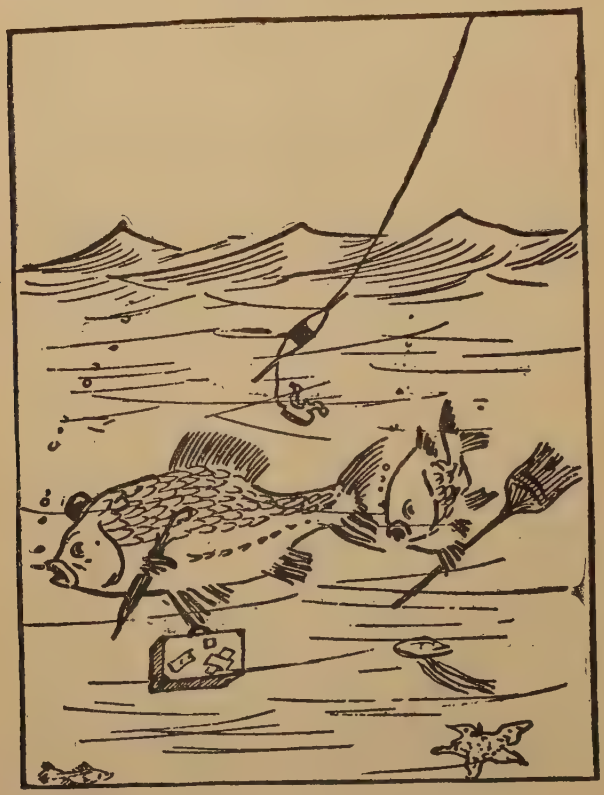
"She talked so much to her husband about wanting to live in a tree, that he finally told her flatly it couldn't be done; but agreed that they might move back among the roots of the willow, where he had boarded before he was married. That didn't suit Mrs. Perch at all; she felt certain it would be all right for them to have a nest like the birds, and there was nothing he could say to drive the idea out of her silly head.

"One day her husband had to go down stream on a business trip, and he had no sooner started with his valise and umbrella than Mrs. Perch saw a hook and line dangling in the water.

"'There!' she said to herself, 'that's my chance. I'll climb up the line and sit in the tree; then I can talk to that fine Mrs. Bluejay, and learn from her just how to live in a nest.'

"So she smoothed down her scales and hurried up to the hook, and it wasn't many seconds before

Mr. Man's boy jerked her ashore. She flew high in the air, and then flitted through the leaves like a bird; but she came plump down on the bank,



Mr. Perch Goes on a Business Trip.

and was doing her best to get back into the water when some one dropped her in a basket.

"She never met Mrs. Bluejay; but went for

the first and only time with Mr. Man's boy to supper. Now as a rule we Frogs are always contented, although once in a while some of us make the mistake of grumbling; but I've found that the fellow who isn't satisfied with what is pretty near fair, gets into trouble, as Mr. Bull Frog did when he fought for a prize with Mr. Mouse.

WHEN MR. FROG AND MR. MOUSE FOUGHT.

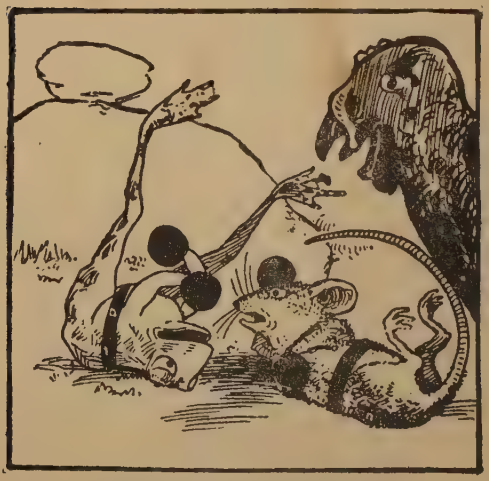
"What, didn't you ever hear about that? I supposed everybody knew of it, for 'Squire Owl made a lot of poetry, and I'll sing it to you."

A bull-frog had been reading,
Of fighters great and small,
And thought he'd go in training
For contests in the fall.
He thought of all the medals
And prizes to work for,
Then practiced every moment
To build his muscles more.

At last when he was ready,
A field mouse challenged him,
And Mister Frog said, smiling,
"I feel like Sunny Jim.

The idea of a field mouse
To challenge such a man;
The ugly little urchin,
I'll kill him if I can."

The referee, a turkey,
Was chosen by the crowd,
He looked the challenge over,
And read the rules aloud.
He said, " You mustn't strike low,
Or try to make a foul,
Such acts will end the contest,
I leave it to the owl.



Trouble Between the Fighters.

They fought and fought all morning,
At last the frog sang out:

They fought and fought all the morning, the Frog and the Mouse.

"He kicked me on the knee-joint.
A foul—I claim the bout."
"It's not a foul," said Field Mouse,
"I never touched his knee,"
And thus a quarrel started,
As they could not agree.

They talked and neither heeded
The words the turkey said;
At last the turk grew weary
And slowly scratched his head.
When both for prizes clamored,
The turkey coughed—a-hem!
And said, "I'll end this contest,
And gobbled both of them.

"'Squire Owl is great on poetry, so all of us around here think; but he doesn't repeat any of it till after dark, and then those who are not out hunting for supper, feel more like taking a nap than sitting under a tree listening to him, with the chances that he'll gobble one or two of us up, before he has finished.

"No, of course I can't be expected to have very much love for 'Squire Owl, because he'll eat any of my family whenever he has a chance, and it can't be more than three months since he gobbled up one of my brothers. Now Mr. Crow is a much

more pleasant bird, and a great one to tell funny stories. Almost every creature around here is on good terms with him, and I often hop up under the big tree when he gives one of his green teas.

Mr. Crow, the Story-Teller.

"Yes, I suppose it does seem odd to you because I can live on land or in the water as best pleases me, and a good many people have the idea that I can stay beneath the surface the same as a fish; but it isn't true. I need to come up for air every few minutes, else I'd be drowned the same as you would. Drown frogs? Why of course you can. If you ever saw a couple of big ones fighting, you'd have known that. If you can get a fellow by the throat and hold his head under the water, he's soon done for. Have I? Well, there have been times when I just had to, or be drowned myself; but I'm getting so big now that there are very few around here who'd like to make trouble for me.

"I always took pretty good care of myself, and tried to keep my wits about me when I got into

trouble, which is the reason why I've lived so long where it seems as if everybody was trying to eat everybody else. That reminds me of a pretty good story Mr. Crow tells, to show that a fellow can save himself many a time by being jolly, and ready to take a joke, instead of whining and crying.

FUNNY MR. FROG.

"Once upon a time, as Mr. Crow tells the story, a pelican was walking on the shore of a pond when he came across young Mr. Frog.

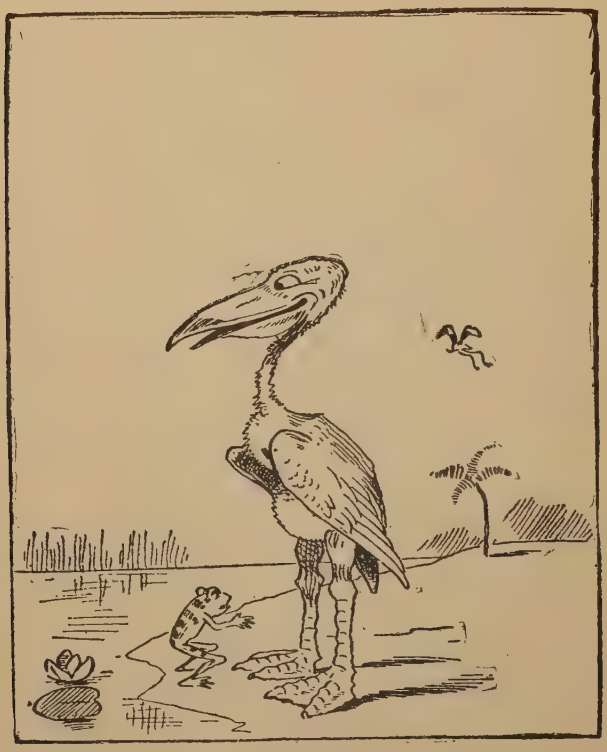
"'Hello,' he said, 'you're just the fellow I was looking for. My stomach reminds me that it is about dinner time, and there is no one I would rather have to dine with me than you.'

"'You don't mean that you're going to eat me, do you?' young Mr. Frog asked, feeling just the least bit fussed about going down the pelican's long neck.

"'That's what I'd thought would be the only thing to do, because there doesn't seem to be anything else on the bill of fare. Besides, I was always fond of frogs.'

"'But I'm green,' said young Mr. Frog, think-

ing he might as well laugh as cry, since there didn't seem to be any way out of the scrape.



Ready for Dinner.

"'That's a good joke,' the pelican said with a grin, 'and you seem to be a jolly sort of a fellow; but I'm going to eat you just the same, for I think you must be ripe.'

"'It is hard to be picked off so soon,' young Mr. Frog replied, 'and I don't suppose I can coax you to take something sweet first. When do you intend to begin?'

"'This very moment,' the pelican said as he opened his big mouth and took young Mr. Frog inside.

"Now it surely did seem as if the last hope had gone; but while he sat on the bird's tongue waiting to be swallowed, he thought of a good joke, and cried out, knocking on Mr. Pelican's upper bill:

"'Say, let me out a minute, I want to ask you a riddle.'

"'Stay, where you are and do your talking,' Mr. Pelican said, as if he wasn't very well pleased to be interrupted in such a manner while he was at dinner.

"'Why are you like Mr. Man when he has a bad cold?' young Mr. Frog asked, lifting up the pelican's bill so he could peep out.

"'I haven't any time to guess riddles now,' and Mr. Pelican seemed to be losing his temper. 'It's just my dinner hour. What is the answer?'

"'It's because you've got a frog in your throat,' young Mr. Frog replied.

"That tickled Mr. Pelican wonderfully, and he laughed and laughed, opening his big mouth as he did so, when young Mr. Frog found it a very easy matter to jump out and make his escape, which shows, so Mr. Crow says, that it is better to laugh than cry when you get into trouble."

Mr. Frog leaned back against the bulrushes, when the story had come to an end, and looked up at your Aunt Amy as if expecting some word of praise; but since she remained silent, he said as if speaking to himself:

A FASHIONABLE FAMILY.

"Perhaps that wasn't quite as good as most of the stories Mr. Crow tells; but I thought it seemed to come in just right with what I was talking about. Hello, I declare if there isn't Mr. Goggle Eyes and all his family out for a stroll. Will you look at them?"

"Now did you ever see anything so foolish?" Mr. Frog cried as the family marched along the shore of the pond in single file, each carrying a toad-stool as an umbrella.

The father led the way, and then came Mrs.

Goggle Eyes, after which were the children, and Mr. Frog thus named them as they passed:

"That tall young chap is the oldest of the family, and they named him Green Jacket, for his mother thinks his coat is of a brighter color than any fellow in this pond can show. Next to

Mr. Goggle Eyes and His Family.

Greeny is Miss Soprano, or Soapy, as the young frogs call her, and old Goggle Eyes declares that she is the best singer anywhere around, although I can't believe that her voice is anything so very wonderful. The third of the children is Young Bull, and the last hasn't been named yet; he's hardly more than a baby, and every one speaks of

him as Taddy. Now isn't it all nonsense for them to carry toad-stools when they go out into the sun? But Mrs. Goggle Eyes is dreadfully afraid their green coats will fade, so she makes every one lug around something to keep off the sun."

The family marched sedately along, giving no heed either to your Aunt Amy or Mr. Frog, and they surely did present a comical appearance. The toad-stools were not large enough to protect more than their mouths, yet all seemed perfectly satisfied, probably because of the belief that they were following the fashion.

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MRS. FROG AND MRS. MOUSE.

"Those Goggle Eyes think they are a little better than any one else," Mr. Frog continued in a tone of displeasure; but you can set it down as a fact that their pride will have a fall some day, and it may turn out to be as bad a tumble as Mrs. Squeaky Mouse and Mrs. Bully Frog got.

"Never heard of that? Why, I supposed it was known all over the country. You see, Mrs. Mouse and Mrs. Frog met one day not far from where you are sitting, and Mrs. Frog was feeling

very nice because her dress was such a bright green, so after they had talked of the weather, and each one had told what cute things their children said, Mrs. Frog hopped around Mrs. Mouse two or three times to show herself.

"'Don't you think my dress fits well?' she asked.

"'Yes, it doesn't look very badly; but isn't there a wrinkle in the back?' and Mrs. Mouse began to stroke her own fur gown.

"'I'm sure it fits me like a glove,' Mrs. Frog said as she tried to look over her shoulder. 'I am always very particular about what I wear, as people should be who stand so high in the world as do we Frogs.'

"'I have never heard that you moved in any higher society than does the Mouse family,' and by this time Mrs. Mouse was beginning to lose her temper.

"Then the two began scolding, each claiming to be higher in the world than the other, and while they were making a great fuss old Mr. Eagle came along.

"'Hello! What seems to be the matter?' he asked, and the words were hardly more than out of his mouth before both the quarrelsome ones

claimed that he should settle the question which was causing them so much trouble.

"'So you think you stand high in the world, do you?' he asked with a laugh, 'and yet neither of you has done more than raise her nose out of the mud. I'll show you what high life is.'

"Then he grabbed Mrs. Mouse in one claw and Mrs. Frog in the other, going up so far in the air that the trembling old creatures were afraid of being lost in the clouds:

"'Now we'll see how high you stand in this world,' he said as he let them drop.

WHY STORKS BUILD THEIR NESTS IN HIGH PLACES.

"There wasn't any more quarreling between those two from that time, because when they struck the ground neither had any breath left in their bodies, and 'Squire Owl gobbled them for supper. Mr. Crow says that standing high in the world doesn't depend on making such a great show; but on the way you behave, and that those who can fly the highest are not always in the top notch of society. Look at the stork; now I'm sure he isn't in high life, even though he does live

Mr. Eagle grabbed Mrs. Mouse in one claw and Mrs. Frog in the other and flew away. Page 38.

way up at the top of everything. It was what you might call an accident that sent him so high, as I can prove by the verses 'Squire Owl wrote about it. Here they are as I remember them."

There is just one thing, dear Stork,
I'd like to know—
Won't you tell me why you build
Your nest so high?
Often on a smoky chimney
Where there's snow.
Is a nest a great deal nicer
Near the sky?

Why not build your nests like song birds,
In the trees;
Or like meadow larks beneath
The shady grass?
Does your constitution like a
Higher breeze?
Or perhaps you try to elevate
Your class.

"Well, I'll tell you," said the stork.
"It's just this way:
Years ago we built much nearer
To the ground;
But the boys with slings and pop-guns
Came one day,
And we flew up high and never
Have come down."

"Now in Strassburg you will see my
Cosy nest
On a chimney where the boys can't
Shoot or climb.
There my folks enjoy a needed
Quiet rest,
And you'll find us there, my dear, most
All the time."

Saved From the Boys.

"What? You don't see how the poetry applies to such a case as the quarrel between Mrs. Mouse and Mrs. Frog? Well, that is strange! I can't

explain it; but 'Squire Owl says it does, and he ought to know because he made the verses. I don't claim to be very much of a scholar myself, not having gone to school when I was young, for about that time Professor Stork had just finished the education of some little frogs I knew, and the graduating exercises frightened me. I wish I had learned more when I was young; but it's too late now, of course.

WHEN PROFESSOR STORK KEPT SCHOOL.

"How queer it is that young folks believe there isn't any great need of getting an education while they are going to school, for it can be had, so they think, after they've grown up, and yet one old fellow out of every twenty is always whining because he didn't attend to his lessons when he had nothing else to do, or he's taking the trouble to explain that there's precious little chance to go back and study after the proper time has passed. So you want to know about Professor Stork? I'll tell the story, although it isn't a funny one to me, because of what happened then, I kept away from school, and have been sorry for it ever since.

"It was the next season after I'd been promoted from the tadpole class, when half a dozen of my friends realized, as so few young people do, that they needed a better education than could be had in this pond, and went to the oldest frog, asking if he would give them a few lessons now and then.

The Oldest Settler.

"'Ker-chunk! po-dunk!' the old fellow said. 'I don't know anything about teaching. Besides, I'm too old. Also, I'm lazy; I love to sit in the sun on a lily-pad, and don't want to be bothered by a lot of little frogs hopping about.'

"Then the little fellows went to the biggest fish, and asked him the same question.

"'The first thing for you to do,' he said, 'is to get rid of those ridiculous legs, and grow a tail like mine.'

"'But we used to have a tail and no legs, when we were polliwogs,' one little frog sang. 'We've been learning ever since to get rid of our tails, and to grow some legs. We've got as far as "legs" in our lessons.'

"'Very well,' answered the fish in a tone of ill humor. 'If you know so much about it you'd better be teaching schools of your own; but you needn't try to teach me to have legs,' and away he swam.

"'That's the very idea,' one of the little frogs cried. 'We must get somebody with legs to teach our school.'

"'The stork has the longest legs of anybody in the pond,' said another little frog, and off to the stork all of them hopped.

"Dear me, how he laughed to see them coming!

"'Teach a frog school? Of course I will; it's what I've been doing all my life. Now get in a row,' Mr. Stork cried. 'Not that way, but one

behind another.' Then he opened his bill as wide as he could. 'Do you see my mouth? It's a good opening for a live young frog, so jump in!'

"And those silly frogs jumped down the stork's throat one after the other. That was how they got their education, or, at least, so the stork said, and that is why I never went to school again.

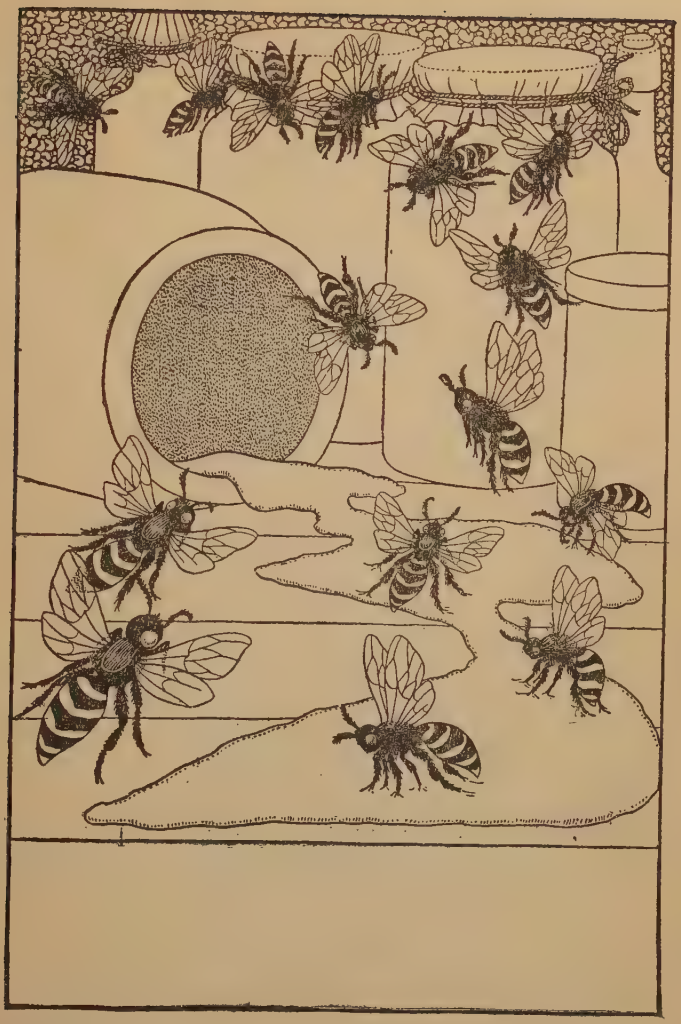
WHEN THE WASPS HAD A FEAST.

"The way I figured it out, after hearing about Mr. Stork's school, was that a fellow stands a chance of getting too much of a good thing, as the wasps did when Johnny Man upset the jar of honey, and then ran away."

"What happened then?" your Aunt Amy asked, and Mr. Frog replied:

"Nothing very much, except that an old Mr. Wasp found it, and he spent two hours calling in his relatives and friends, before taking so much as a mouthful for himself, and then the crowd set to work eating the sweet stuff.

"Oh me, oh my, how they did eat! They flew right down into it, never thinking that their legs and wings would be stuck together almost as



The wasps couldn't fly a bit, they had so much honey on them.

badly as if they had jumped into a bottle of mucilege, and then Mrs. Man came.

"The wasps couldn't fly a little bit, because they had so much honey on them, and Mrs. Man killed every last one before she began to undo the mischief Johnny had done."

"I am glad to know that you try to profit by the experiences of others," your Aunt Amy said, and Mr. Frog replied:

WHEN WILLIE MAN WAS FRIGHTENED.

"Oh, yes, I've learned some things since then, as every frog will when he grows older; but it isn't what I might have had in the way of an education if I'd gone to school in my younger days. But I know enough to frighten Mr. Man's boy, and what's more, I did it not a week ago. It happened this way, and the boy's name is Bill, at least, that's what the other fellows call him.

"It seems, as I learned afterward, that he had just found out how to make a sling-shot with a rubber band he found on his father's desk, a piece of kid cut from one of his sister's gloves, and a stick. When the thing was finished he came

down here and stood around watching, saying to himself meanwhile so loud that I, who was over there behind the lily stalks, heard him:

"'I hope a regular old hummer will show himself, for I've got the sweetest kind of a round stone to hit him with.'

"Just then I poked my nose out of the water, and Bill turned to get the stone which he had left behind him with a dozen others, and as he did so I jumped out, puffing myself up till I must have looked like the largest frog that ever lived.

"Bill heard me when I struck the ground in front of him, and turned around quickly. Dear me, but that boy was frightened, and dropped the stone as if it had been hot.

"'Why don't you shoot me?' I asked, making my voice as hoarse as I could.

"'It wasn't you I came after,' he whined, trembling until his teeth chattered.

"'Of course it wasn't,' I said, swelling out yet bigger. 'You're looking for some little fellow who can't strike back, that's the kind of a boy you are. Throw that shooter into the pond?'

"Well, if you'll believe it, Bill was so frightened that he did just what I told him, and then I gave the rascal a lecture on cowards who tackle

Dear me, but that boy was frightened.

those who can't help themselves, such as he won't forget in a hurry.

"He was glad to get away, and I wasn't sorry to see him go, because I'd held my breath so long in order to keep my body swelled out, that I had

Mr. Frog frightening Willie.

a cramp in my jaws. I think I'd be a wonderful frog if I had studied harder when I was young," and the old fellow hugged his knees as he rocked to and fro on the toad-stool.

"Oh, no, frightening Mr. Man's boy wasn't the brightest thing I ever did," Mr. Frog said in reply to your Aunt Amy's question. "I once showed a big buck deer that it was safer for him to be a friend to me than an enemy, and before the lesson was learned I guess he was willing to agree that frogs aren't all foolish.

WHEN MR. FROG TAUGHT MR. DEER GOOD MANNERS.

"You see it was like this, and not so very long ago: I was on this very pond, near that lot of lily-pads over there, when a big deer with big, big horns, came down into the water, puffing and panting so hard that I didn't need to ask if the dogs were after him. I suppose he had lost his temper, for when I said 'Good evening' as politely as Mrs. Goggle Eyes could have spoken, he grunted:

"'Get out of my way, or I'll step on you.'

"I slipped off the pads with a great splash, and I said:

"'Suppose you try it once?'

"'Don't make so much noise, or the dogs will come this way to find out what the trouble is,' he

Mr. Deer frightens Mr. Frog away. Page 49.

Croaky Frog.

said nervously; but I jumped around all the more, saying as I did so:

"'It takes me a good while to get out of your way so's I won't be stepped on.'

"Then I poked out my nose just in front of him, and he raised his foot to strike, when down I went, making as much noise as Mr. Man's boy would have caused.

"'Look here, my friend,' he said, and by this time he was talking very sweet, 'do you want to see me killed before your eyes?'

"'If you should be killed, I wouldn't be afraid you'd step on me,' I said, going under again as if I was actually afraid of my life, although he might have pounded with his hoof all night, and never come within an inch of me.

"'I am very sorry I spoke as I did,' he replied, putting his foot into the water carefully so that I might see he didn't want to do any harm. 'I'll apologize for what I said when the dogs had made me so nervous that I didn't really know what I was doing. If you are agreeable, I'd like to count you as one of my friends, Mr. Frog.'

"Of course I couldn't do less than act as if I was well pleased, for by this time the dogs were near at hand, and if I had splashed the water without

croaking, the chances are the whole pack would have been there in a twinkling to find out what was astir. Yes, I have met that same deer a good many times since then, and if one can believe all he sees, the fellow won't again despise anybody or anything because it is smaller than himself.

"You are very kind to say so; but do you know there are a great many in this world who not only think as you do, that I have a good voice, but claim that there isn't another basso who can hold a candle to me. Of course I have improved very much since I first began to sing in public; but even as a young frog I was believed to be quite a marvel. Just listen to this."

WHEN MR. FROG LED THE ORCHESTRA.

Then Mr. Frog, rising gracefully on his hind feet, tested what he called his "chest notes," running up and down the scale easily and with considerable noise.

"As I have said," he went on after showing your Aunt Amy the quality of his voice, even while quite young I was famed as a musician, Then I played the cornet, and led the Frog Town Orchestra. I can't truthfully say that we played

before all the crowned heads of Europe, for that class of people didn't come where we were; but it is a fact, or should be, for we sang loud enough, that we have been heard by every one who came within half a mile of this pond during the summer season."

"Where do you go in the winter, Mr. Frog?" your Aunt Amy asked.

"Into the mud, of course," he replied, looking surprised because such a question had been necessary. "Did you suppose we stayed around on the surface at risk of having our toes frozen? Please give us credit for having sufficient sense to get in out of the cold.

"But as I was saying about our orchestra when I was the leader: Did you ever see the picture of me which we used in our advertisements? Never did? Well, now, that is strange. If you will wait here a minute I'll get you one."

Without stopping to learn whether such a gift was wanted, Mr. Frog dove under his favorite lily-pad, returning a moment later with a portrait, of which the picture shown here is a very good copy.

"It may be a bit damp," he said in a tone of apology; but a little water doesn't destroy the likeness. Of course it isn't for me to repeat the

words of praise that have been spoken regarding me, yet in order to do justice to our orchestra, I

Mr. Frog When He Was Young.

must say that everybody seemed to believe we could make more noise than any band of frogs

that ever had performed in this pond. Why, even Mr. Eel, who seldom speaks a good word for any one, admitted as much as that.

WHEN MR. EEL WENT SHOPPING.

"Speaking of Mr. Eel reminds me to ask if you ever heard the poetry 'Squire Owl made about his going down to the dam shopping for his wife? Well, if you never did, then I must sing it, even though my voice is not at its best this afternoon."

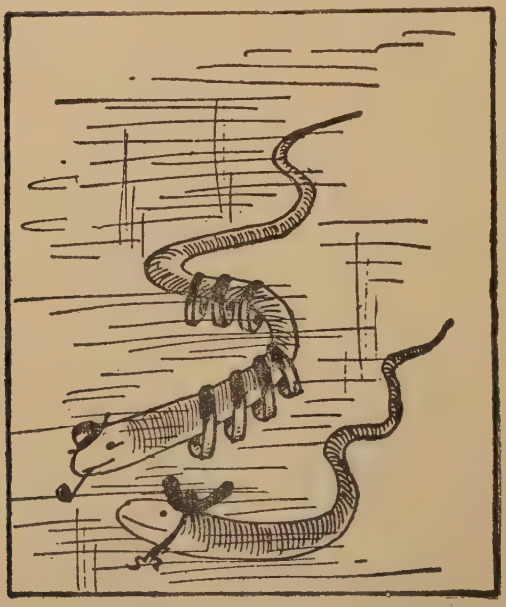
Said Mrs. Eel one morning,
"Pray don't forget those things.
Remember first the crullers,
And then the muffin rings.

"Be sure to stop at mamma's
And get a jar of jam;
Then swim down past the grocer's
And buy a little ham.

"I'd like a dozen eggplants,
A dozen onions, too;
Of parsley get two bunches
To put into the stew.

"Then come home past the butcher's
And buy a beefsteak rare,
A pound or two of cutlets,
If you see good ones there."

She tied a string around him
So he'd know what to do;
He bought the things she wanted,
Yet reached home with but two.



Mr. Eel on His Return From Market.

They were the rings and crullers,
Which to the eel had clung,
Because he had them nicely
Upon his backlet strung.

"My dear," he said, "don't send me
In future for your things,
Unless each has a hole in
Like these nice muffin rings."

"Perhaps you are not fond of music?" Mr. Frog said in an inquiring tone as he came to the end of his song, and your Aunt Amy could not truthfully say that she admired such music as he was trying to entertain her with, therefore she replied that she thought a frog chorus sounded better from a distance.

"There may be something in that," he said thoughtfully; "but of course I have no means of knowing, since I am always one of the performers. But you shall have all the music you want from this time on, for I will see to it that every frog in the pond does his best and loudest. It is a real pleasure to feel that you are singing to somebody, and I'm sure you're better than a log of wood, or a family of eels.

"Tired, of course not, and even if we were, what difference would that make? We were put in this world to sing, or, at least, I suppose we were, for frogs can't do anything else very well, and its our duty to keep a song going all the time. Don't you find that a fellow feels ever so much nicer when the day's work or play is finished, if he knows he's done all his duty without shirking the least little bit?

"I used to know a frog who was actually lazy.

Just think of that! Why, it's being as bad as some of Mr. Man's boys, and I wouldn't like to think that of myself. Well, this lazy frog couldn't be coaxed to sing more than one song in a night; he'd say he was tired, or sleepy, or something of that kind; but if anybody proposed a game of leap-frog, he was on the spot in a minute, ready to play longer and harder than any one else.

"Well, somehow it used to seem as if the lazy fellow got along just as well as those who did their full duty and perhaps a little more. He could find all he wanted to eat, and always managed to get on the sunny side of every log, no matter how many others had been waiting for that same spot. When the other frogs scolded about him, and said that it didn't seem to make any difference in this world, according to the way he got along, whether a fellow did his duty or not, my grandfather used to say:

"'Young frogs, bear in mind that there is no pleasure or satisfaction half so great as the knowledge, when the day's work is over, that a frog has done all that was required of him by his Maker and his parents.'

"Having said this the old fellow would raise his voice in the loudest and gruffest solo you ever

heard, and I used to think that he must have been very happy all the time, if frogs were put into this world for the sole purpose of singing. Yes, it's a great thing to be able to say, as the lightning bug could after the mosquito had been found, that you've done your very best.

WHEN THE MOSQUITO LOST HIMSELF.

"Want to hear the story of the lightning bug and the mosquito? That is one Mr. Crow tells very often, when the young squirrels grumble and complain because they are obliged to work hard gathering nuts at the very time when they want to enjoy themselves.

"Well, Mr. Crow says that once upon a time the greatest excitement prevailed in Mosquitoville, owing to the fact that the son of one of the oldest citizens was lost. It seems that Eugene—that was his name—who was a very stylish young mosquito, had fallen into the filthy habit of smoking cigarettes, and the doctors believed he was really losing his mind—going crazy, or foolish, you know. He had been seen early in the afternoon sitting on a cheese-box in his mother's kitchen, coaxing his little brother to go over to the drug

store for a package of cigarettes: but the youngest mosquito, who was really a sensible fellow, refused to do anything of the kind.

"He left Eugene crying on the cheese-box, and that was the last seen of him for one full day and night. When his parents came home and failed to find him in his accustomed lounging places, and when the odor of cigarettes no longer poisoned the air, all the relatives and friends started out to find poor Eugene, and his mother wrung her feelers in anguish as she thought of what terrible things might have happened to her boy.

"But search as they might, no one could find any trace of him, and Old Mr. Mosquito's voice trembled with emotion when he reproved one of the cousins for suggesting that possibly Eugene had been run over by an automobile and had stuck to the wheel, which would account for their failure to find the poor fellow's body.

"'We will not give up the search!' the lightning bug cried bravely. 'Come on once more, fellows, and this time I'll lead the way.'

"All who were at liberty to take part in the search followed the lightning bug, while the sorrowing parents and friends who did not feel inclined to exert themselves very much, waited in

anxious suspense the result of the others' labors.

"The searching party was absent a long while; not until after midnight was anything heard from the company, and then a loud, triumphant hum was heard in the distance.

"'My boy! My boy!' Mrs. Mosquito cried as the odor of cigarette smoke came to her on the night breeze, and a few moments afterward the son whom all had mourned as lost forever, was in the midst of his rejoicing friends.

"'Where did you find him?' asked the mother as she wrapped her feelers around the truant.

"'The lightning bug found me,' Eugene cried with a shy smile.

"'Yes,' added the water bug, 'he had crawled into a keyhole to escape a big spider.'

"'After getting in I couldn't see to get out,' Eugene said, and the lightning bug added:

"'He was all in the dark until I lighted my little lamp, and then he held my feeler while we made our way out of the keyhole.'

"Of course everybody cheered, and next morning there was a big feast, and all that sort of thing, you know. It is said that the lightning bug married Eugene's cousin; but Mr. Crow doesn't go into that part of the story, because all he cares to

show by telling it, is that you should always work your very best, no matter what you start out to do."

Poor Eugene.

"Mr. Crow must be a very wise bird," your

Aunt Amy said as Mr. Frog ceased speaking and leaned back against the bulrushes, hugging his knees with both front feet.

"Indeed he is. I don't know how the creatures who live in and around this pond would get on without him. Mr. Man calls him hard names; says he is a thief, and that he pulls up the young corn when he should be trying to find honest work. Now I don't know what Mr. Crow can do, if the only food near at hand is corn that has just been planted. It is his misfortune if he can't eat anything but grain, and of course he must have enough to keep him alive. I'm willing to admit that he doesn't work very hard; but then again he can't be called a glutton, and never eats more than he really needs.

WHAT MR. WILD HOG TAUGHT MR. FOX.

"You must admit that Mr. Crow can tell a good story, and the best one I ever heard from him, was about the way Mr. Wild Hog taught Mr. Fox good manners."

"I would like very much to hear about it," your Aunt Amy said as Mr. Frog ceased speaking

much as though he had no intention of repeating the story, and without delay he told the following:

"One day Mr. Fox saw Mr. Wild Hog scratching himself against a tree, and he asked, as if it was his business to know everything that was being done in the forest:

"'What are you doing, Mr. Hog?'

"'Can't you see for yourself?' Mr. Hog asked, and Mr. Fox replied:

"'It looks very much as if you were trying to scratch yourself on that tree.'

"'I'm doing a good deal more than that,' Mr. Hog grunted.

"'What else *are* you doing?' Mr. Fox asked in surprise.

"'I'm minding my own business, and if you'll do the same from this on, I'll guarantee that you won't have so much trouble in the future as you've had in the past.'

"Then Mr. Hog walked off, and I've heard it said that the lesson did Mr. Fox a world of good."

Mr. Frog paused a moment, as if going over again in his mind the story he had just told, after which he continued his praise of Mr. Crow.

"What are you doing?" asked Mr. Fox. "Minding my own business," said Mr. Hog. Page 62. *Croaky Frog.*

"There isn't a more sociable fellow in this neighborhood than Mr. Crow, and it is not right to find fault with him simply because he spends a great deal of his time in talking; but if anything goes wrong on the farm, Mr. Man says 'it's that old crow again,' and sends his boy out to shoot him. But Mr. Crow has traveled so much that he knows how to keep out of trouble, and it isn't often the farmer catches him asleep. There is one thing I admire about Mr. Crow: He never cries because he isn't some other kind of a bird; he is contented with the way he was made, which is more than can be said for very many who live around here. Take the Field Mouse family for example. I'm going to tell you about their wanting to be frogs, and then I must go, for I'm expecting to see the young frog who plays first violin in our orchestra, who wants to talk with me about the program for the concert to-night, and I've promised to give him the benefit of my experience.

MISS GOGGLE EYES HAS A NEW SONG.

"Miss Goggle Eyes is going to sing a new song, and he is very anxious to have everything go as it should, for there will be a lot of summer boarders

down here this evening, and it would be sad if the young miss broke down on her first appearance in public. 'Squire Owl wrote the verses, and I set them to music, so you can understand that I am bound to do all I can to make the concert successful. Suppose I run over the words, just to give you an idea of what we can do?"

Then Mr. Frog gracefully arose to his hind feet, and sang the following:

Did you ever hear of horses catching fish?
Did you ever see a tarpon in a dish?
Did you ever see a bear
Eating ginger cake—it's rare—
And I'm sure you never saw one,
I am sure.

Did you ever see a kitten try to swim?
Did you ever see a hippo tall and slim?
Did you ever see a crow
That a gunner didn't know?
I am sure you never saw one,
I am sure.

Did you ever catch a lobster with a plum?
Did you ever catch a bug that wasn't dumb?
Did you ever see a whale
Playing baseball with his tail?
I am sure you never saw one,
I am sure.

"Sweet, pathetic lines, aren't they?" Mr. Frog asked as he came to an end of his croaking song which, to your Aunt Amy, seemed to have very little music in it. "I think it is quite the best thing 'Squire Owl has written this season.

The Horse that Caught a Fish.

"What's that? Oh, yes, about the mice who wanted to be frogs. Well, one day last summer when I sat out here on a toad-stool very much like the one I am now on, trying to make up my mind what I should do that evening to please the

summer boarders who would come to the concert, three young field mice came sauntering along looking for grasshoppers.

"Of course they saw me, and seemed quite pleased with my yellow vest. I thought it was a shame the little things should think I had only come into this world to wear good clothes, so I trilled a few notes of 'Squire Owl's latest song, and they were really charmed.

"'I wish I could do that!' one of them said with a sigh of envy, and I, wishing to encourage the ignorant little things, said carelessly:

"'It is easy enough, my dear.'

"'It may be for you; but I could never do it, because I haven't got the right kind of a throat.'

WHEN THE MICE WANTED TO SING.

"'That would come with practice,' I replied knowing the mice could never hope to sing as well as I do; but trying to give them all the encouragement I could. 'It's in the practice, I assure you. Practice, my dear young mice, makes perfect, and there is nothing in this world to be had without the striving. Now I exercise my

throat not less than ten hours out of every twenty-four.'

"'Mercy on me!' cried one of the party. 'I don't think it's worth while to work so hard as that, simply for the sake of singing. Now I'd rather be a frog who didn't have any voice, so I could swim around in the cool pond and enjoy myself the whole day long. It is very hot out in the fields, and the dust tickles your throat. How did you learn to swim, Mr. Frog? Is that to be had by practice?'

"'Certainly, my dear, it is like everything else in this world. Now watch me,' and I stepped into the pond that they might get an idea of what really graceful swimming is like. 'Jump in quietly like this; then strike out with all four feet like this; and next like this, and in a few months your hair will come off. Your feet will be webbed, like mine; your mouths will stretch, and you will lose your tails. Then you will be frogs, I suppose it sounds queer to hear me talk like that; but I know, for it isn't such a very long while since I didn't have any mouth to speak of, and a tail that was always in my way. Look at me now!' and I came out on the bank where they might have a full view of one of the most frogly

frogs in this pond, if I do say it myself. 'Remember, little mice,' I said in conclusion, 'that you must have patience and perseverance; those two qualities, with plenty of practice, is all that is needed to change anything into anything.'

"Well, the little fellows thanked me very politely, and, as I learned afterward from their parents, went off to Mr. Man's barn, thinking it would be safer to make their experiments in the trough from which the horses drank, than out here in the pond.

"When they were all on the edge of the trough the water looked deep, and they lost very much of their courage.

"'You go first,' the largest mouse said to his next smaller brother, 'and Sammy and I will follow, after you've swum across once.'

"'You're the biggest, and ought to show us how it is done!' the next to the largest mouse said, and little Sammy, who was the bravest of the three, cried as he curled his tail around his ears to prevent it from getting under his feet:

"'Oh, you're both 'fraid cats! Here goes for a frog!' and leaping gracefully in the air as he had seen me, the little fellow plunged into the water; but hadn't more than gone under before he cried:

"'Oh, I'm drowning! Save me! Help a fellow, can't you?'

"'Are you beginning to feel froggy?' the oldest mouse asked as he watched the movements of his brother's legs.

Saving Sammy's Life.

"'I feel wet, that's how I feel!' the fellow in the water cried; 'and what's more, I'm drowning! Can't you hear me calling for help?'

"'You haven't had time to practice,' the next to the biggest mouse said. 'The frog told us it was all in practice, and you mustn't drown till you've tried this plan.'

"'Help! Help!' little Sammy squealed piteously. 'I'm really drowning, and can't practice because I can't get my breath. Help! Mammy! Pappy! Help!'

"Just then Father and Mother Mouse came running up, and little Sammy was pulled out of the trough as he had begun to sink for the third time; but Mrs. Mouse didn't spend much time petting her half-drowned child, for after making certain he could breathe properly, she bit his ear two or three times, as she said angrily:

"'You deserve even worse punishment for being so silly. If you ever expect to amount to anything in this world, you must give over trying to be something other than what you are. Be contented as a mouse; but strive to become a better mouse than has ever been seen in this neighborhood, and thus you will be doing your full duty in this world.'

"I suppose Mrs. Field Mouse thinks she has every reason to blame me for starting her young ones on the way of being frogs, and I feel certain

that if they'd tried long enough, everything would have been with them, as it was with me when my tail dropped off. Hello, there's the first violin lying on the bank in the sun! I wonder how long he has been waiting for me? I would really

Giving the First Violin Advice.

enjoy staying longer with you; but can't because of having pledged my word to the young fellow over there. I shall give him the benefit of my experience, and have no doubt but that he will profit by my words. Ker-chug, ker-chune, I'll see you soon, as we say here in the pond." Mr. Frog

cried as he leaped into the water and swam across to where the first violin was waiting for him.

When your Aunt Amy came away old Mr. Frog was sitting on the warm sand with one leg crossed over the other, clasping his knee with both front claws, and, probably, giving the first violin valuable advice.

THE END.

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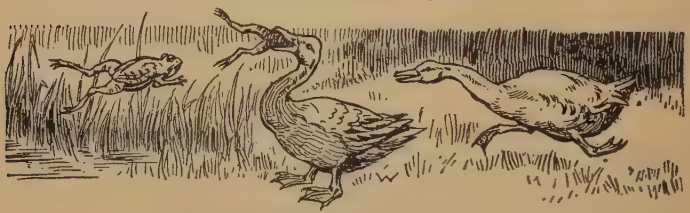

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